

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



*'With Jesus, we learn together  
through faith and love'*

## Religious Education Policy

## **Rationale**

If our pupils are to grow up as practising Catholics, there must be a commitment to the faith, through which, by example and teaching, they will come to know of God's love and compassion for everyone and live according to His teachings.

Through our teaching and way of life we will promote and actively implement our school's Mission Statement, fulfil the aims of our school and live out Christ's Gospel.

We must also remind ourselves that, parents, as the first and best teachers of our children, have a vital role in their child's religious upbringing. At St Mary's we recognise our important role in supporting parents with the religious education of their children.

As a Catholic school we take up the challenge to make all parents feel welcome and part of our school family. We strive to provide pastoral care for every family in our community and meet the needs of every individual. St Mary's aims to work in partnership with parents in bringing their children up in the Catholic faith.

## **Purpose**

We aim to develop within each pupil a trusting, loving and personal relationship with God by giving them a solid background to the whole life and mysteries of Christ. We aim to give each child strong moral and spiritual beliefs, through the Gospel teachings of Jesus. Through the Gospels, children will develop a positive attitude towards themselves and others, developing a strong sense of what is right and wrong and a confidence in telling others of their beliefs.

We aim to ensure that;

- Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God, Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church
- Pupils develop an awareness and an appreciation of the Catholic Faith and an understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour
- The children will fully know all the areas of study from The Curriculum Directory

We aim to ensure that;

- Pupils come to an understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and observe the traditions of Our Catholic faith
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards people of other faiths, and an understanding of their beliefs and practices
- Pupils have a spiritual dimension to their lives and know how to pray and talk to God

- Pupils grow in knowledge and love of Christ within the Sacraments of the Church
- Pupils are given opportunities to reflect and evaluate their own attitudes to life and their relationships with others
- The liturgical year is reflected in the life and activities of the school

The Parish Priest, governors, staff and parents are valued members of our Catholic community and as such have vital roles to play in relation to the explicit teaching of Religious Education within the school.

Life within the school should reflect a living faith in which Prayer, Worship and Religious Education form the very foundation of school practices and permeate all areas of school life.

The school community works together to provide an atmosphere in which all pupils are enabled to achieve their full potential. In our daily lives we give witness to the values of God's kingdom- prayer, truth, holiness, justice, love, forgiveness and The celebration of the Mass, liturgies, assemblies and prayer are an integral part of our teaching.

### **The aims of Religious Education in St. Mary's (Following the Curriculum Directory 2012 Pg. 6)**

- To present engagingly a comprehensive content which is the basis of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith
- To enable pupils continually to deepen their religious and theological understanding and be able to communicate this effectively
- To present an authentic vision of the Church's moral and social teaching so that pupils can make a critique of the underlying trends in contemporary culture and society
- To raise pupils' awareness of the faith and traditions of other religious communities in order to respect and understand them
- To develop the critical faculties of pupils so that they can relate their Catholic faith to daily life
- To stimulate pupils' imagination and provoke a desire for personal meaning as revealed in the truth of the Catholic faith
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum
- To bring clarity to the relationship between faith and life, and between faith and culture

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

## **Role Of The RE Coordinator**

- To coordinate the development of the school's Religious education

Attend to personal development through;

- Reading and study
- Training courses
- RE Coordinators network
- Contacts with Diocese, LEA and other support services
- Development of good practice in own classroom

Attend to Staff Development through;

- Providing inspiration
  - Working with colleagues
  - Making information available
  - Setting up exhibitions and Displays
  - Having informal and formal discussions with staff about their needs
  - Helping to organise and support in-service training
- Encourage staff through monitoring and curriculum audit
  - With the Head teacher and staff develop a Religious Education development plan
  - With the Head teacher and staff draw up a Religious Education Policy document and handbook
  - Meet termly with the designated link Governors.

## **Parental Support**

- Each topic a newsletter is sent to parents explaining the areas of study their children will be covering in their Religious Education
- Parents are invited to discuss Religious Education at termly open evenings and the teachers give the parents a written report at the end of the year.
- Parents support their children with their religious homework.

## **The Sacraments**

*“The Sacraments are a celebration of the presence of Christ permeating every moment of our lives”*

(Peter Wilkinson, Focus on the Sacraments, Kevin Mayhew Publications).

God’s love and presence is made real through the seven Sacraments of the Church. The Sacraments are a celebration of God being with us and part of us.

Coming to understand the Sacraments is a complex interaction of experiences and celebrations in which the children participate throughout their life at school and beyond. These experiences range from the simplicity of: Christening a doll in the Early Years setting, to seeing older brothers and sisters receiving Communion and Confirmation.

The most important year in our primary school is Year 3. During this time the children are prepared for not only one, but two Sacraments: the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. The children also receive instruction within a Parish based First Communion and Reconciliation programme, which is run by dedicated Catechists.

After receiving First Communion, the children also celebrate at school and lead the annual May Procession.

St Mary’s is a welcoming school and parents, parishioners, governors, new staff and students are warmly welcomed and invited to Masses, assemblies and celebrations.

## **Curriculum**

- At least ten percent of curriculum time is spent teaching Religion
- The main scheme the school uses is the units written by Dr. Margaret Carswell and we also use supplementary material to ensure learning in Religious Education is matched to the Curriculum Directory
- The staff have carefully matched the curriculum directory to the areas they teach throughout the year
- Lesson objectives are planned to ensure they allow children opportunities to reach appropriate levels of attainment.
- Children are given targets to achieve at the start of each new topic
- The children work on a new topic each half term throughout the year

## **Assessment**

- Each child is assessed at the end of each topic
- The teachers use assessment sheets from units written by Dr. Margaret Carswell and adapt them to ensure children are being assessed in all areas
- Each child has an assessment recording sheet with all areas highlighted and dated showing their attainment
- All assessments are recorded on Classroom Monitor each term. The school can then analyse the results and different groups can be identified.

## **Action Plan**

The school identifies each year areas for development in Religious education.

As part of the tracking of pupils' progress the school also tracks and identifies groups of children we want to do additional work with or challenge more in religious education.

## **Children's Work and Displays**

Each class has a religious display relating to the topic they are studying. Teachers also display key words to support children with their learning.

Classes all have prayer areas which are used daily as a focus for prayer. These are also changed throughout the year.

Each room will have children's own prayers displayed on walls or in the form of a book.

All displays and prayer areas are monitored throughout the year.

## **Staff Development / Induction**

Frequent and regular staff meetings are held to discuss the teaching of Religion in school. The RE coordinator attends termly Coordinator's meetings and other relevant courses giving feedback to staff.

Staff are given the opportunity to observe good practice in other classes.

The school attends Diocesan training to help support teaching.

## **Monitoring and Success Criteria**

We aim to;

- Have met the requirements laid down by the Curriculum Directory
- Have created an environment where the values of God's Kingdom, prayer, truth, holiness, justice, love and forgiveness are evident
- Have brought pupils to a truer understanding of the Catholic faith, to be religiously literate
- Have led pupils to have respect for other races, religions and ways of life

## **Inclusion**

### **Setting suitable challenges**

Teachers differentiate R.E. tasks and set high expectations for every pupil during lessons. Teachers use ongoing formative assessment to set targets which are deliberately ambitious.

### **Responding to pupils' needs and overcoming potential barriers for individuals and groups of pupils**

Teachers take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

R.E. lessons are planned to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving. Pupils are given access to specialist equipment and different approaches as required.

Teachers plan R.E. lessons so that pupils with disabilities can access the learning. Potential areas of difficulty are identified and addressed at the outset of work.

Teachers take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress takes account of the pupil's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages.

Teachers plan teaching opportunities to help EAL pupils develop their English and provide the support pupils need to take part in R.E. lessons.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We are committed to treat every person with equality of esteem and the respect and dignity due to a child of God.

At St Mary's we believe that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God regardless of their race, gender, disability, religion, belief or age. Due to this we aim to ensure that all members of our school have equal opportunities to learn, develop and grow with dignity in a community of mutual respect. We are committed to valuing and celebrating the diversity within our community (Please see Diversity and Equality Policy).